

Founder quits anti-psi committee, cites 'media blitz'

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HEW approves education project to explore transpersonal realm

The federal government will sponsor a project designed to explore the farther reaches of human capability.

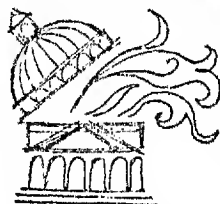
Mary F. Berry, assistant secretary for education of the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, approved the project, titled *The Limits of Educability*, early in December. It will inquire into such topics as altered states of consciousness, values, cultural 'visions,' emotional blocks to learning, new scientific paradigms, creativity, synergy, "myths of transformation," psychic phenomena, paradox, non-linear processing capabilities, extraordinary human capabilities, "superhealth" and the politics of personal growth. The project will culminate in articles, a book and a conference.

"In any absolute sense we can probably never know what the 'limits of educability' are," the project description states. "Yet we can specify areas where we believe there are great disparities between what is being achieved by current educational practice and either known limits achieved through optimal use of current practices or achievable limits through known alternative practices."

Various federal agencies will participate in the project, but half its \$300,000 cost is to be raised privately. Jerry Fletcher of HIEW told *Brain/Mind Bulletin* that co-sponsors are eagerly sought.

"We'd like the participation of as many organizations, large or small, as possible," he said. The Institute of Noetic Sciences already has become a co-sponsor.

For information: Fletcher, Education Division/HEW, 200 Independence Ave. Room 317-H, Washington 20201, (202) 245-8266.



Marcello Truzzi of Eastern Michigan University, founding editor of the journal *Zetetic* and co-founder of the controversial Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, has resigned his editorship, co-chairmanship and membership. Truzzi charged that the committee's executive council is interested only in debunking—not investigating—psychical phenomena.

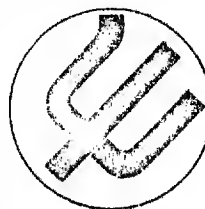
Under his editorship, *Zetetic* was a forum for critical reviews of parapsychological research.

Truzzi said he deplored "the media blitz," the committee's recent attacks on the reporting of unusual phenomena in newspapers and on television. Paul Kurtz, co-chairman of the committee, had held press conferences in recent months urging the media to quell reports of psychic phenomena.

More recently, after Truzzi's resignation, Kurtz filed the committee's complaint with the Federal Trade Commission on the airing of NBC's *Exploring the Unknown*, a 90-minute special on psychic phenomena, hypnotic regression and related topics. NBC was accused of presenting controversial material that "may result in harm to the public." The network's "frequent disclaimers" were considered "inadequate protection."

The committee demanded equal time for "the critical scientific viewpoint" in response to this and all other programs, network and local, that may deal with psychic phenomena. It said that possible consequences of such programs may be

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Pribram at AHP seminar

Future to bring 'hard-nosed' work in 'soft' sciences

Stanford neuroscientist Karl Pribram has predicted that within another 10 or 15 years "all of the really hard-nosed scientific work will be going on in fields that are now considered soft."

Under the auspices of the Assn. for Humanistic Psychology, Pribram led two small, day-long invitational symposia in San Francisco earlier this month to discuss his theory of holographic brain function in a universe whose matrix, "the frequency domain," is expressed in holographic principles. (See *B/MB* special issue, July 4, 1977.)

Pribram has suggested that the model is part of a major shift in the scientific description of reality. It attempts to explain phenomena of normal perception, accounting for remarkable laboratory data, and simultaneously helps to explain many events previously categorized as paranormal. A number of persons well-known in psychology were invited, as well as specialists in other fields: education, medicine, philosophy, religion, physics and the arts.

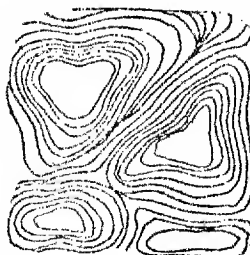
As historic examples of 'soft' disciplines becoming central and

scientifically rigorous, he cited the shift in emphasis from behavioral to cognitive psychology that began in the late 1950s as well as the increasingly non-material world of quantum physics: "relationships between observations—not observables."

According to the holographic theory of brain function, the frequency domain is important in neural processes, just as it is in subatomic physics. Stimuli are perceived by the senses via complex mathematical transforms, an interpretation of interference patterns, much as a hologram is reconstructed by its light source. Pribram presented data on his laboratory findings indicating that the visual system responds to spatial frequencies. Other evidence indicates that all sensory systems obtain their information by "reading out" information from a frequency domain. Synthesizing his and other findings supporting holographic brain principles with speculation by physicists that the universe itself may be holographic in nature (that is, interference patterns of frequencies), Pribram suggests that concrete reality is apparent rather than fundamental.

Mystical insights may be a type of "lensless knowing," a more or less direct perception of the holographic state. Pribram noted wryly, "I think it must be a very compassionate universe—it gave us

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New findings: valium, marijuana, alcohol, heroin

Marijuana research update: Cannabinoids do not cause mutation in human cells, according to Arthur Zimmerman of the University of Toronto department of zoology and Hans Stich of the Cancer Institute, University of British Columbia. . . Marijuana causes constriction of the pupils, not dilation as popularly believed, according to Brian Brown of Smith Kettlewell Institute, San Francisco, and his fellow researchers. But they found no pupil changes in subjects using alcohol—or marijuana in combination with alcohol. . . Tetrahydrocannabinol, the active principle in marijuana, suppresses luteinizing hormone in rats, judging from tests at Duke University by Lee Tyrey and his associates. The dose equivalent of one or two marijuana cigarettes for humans suppressed all LH secretion.



The therapeutic virtues of heroin and marijuana will get a serious look by the National Cancer Institute and other federal agencies by virtue of a memorandum from Peter Bourne, President Carter's special assistant for health.

Health undersecretary Julius Richmond was directed to evaluate the potential medical benefits of the drugs, which are classified as "dangerous." One study comparing heroin and morphine for terminal cancer patients had indicated that heroin caused less nausea, was less constipating, increased the appetite, was less soporific and more mood-enhancing. Heroin is effective in smaller doses, and it is more soluble. Marijuana, in

addition to its promise in the treatment of glaucoma, reportedly has been helpful in relieving nausea from cancer chemotherapy.

Acupuncture eases withdrawal pain in heroin addiction, Wen Hsiang-lai of Tung Wah Hospital, Hong Kong, reported. Fifty-one per cent of the addicts treated by acupuncture were drug-free a year after treatment, compared to 28.5 per cent on methadone. The National Institute of Mental Health has granted Wen \$100,000 for further research.

Valium may reinforce alcoholism, say J. A. Deutsch and Nancy Walton of the University of California-San Diego. Thirty-two alcoholic rats showed an increased craving to drink when they were given Valium during their drying-out period. **Librium**, structurally similar, may have the same effect. . . David Warburton, a psychologist at the University of Reading, England, charged that Hoffmann-La Roche has spent more than \$400 million on the promotion of Valium and Librium. He said that 19 per cent of the women and seven per cent of the men in Great Britain were prescribed tranquilizers in any one year.



Barbiturates cause 5,000 deaths a year and are "probably not effective" in the treatment of insomnia anyway. The National Institute on Drug Abuse has asked the FDA to take appropriate action, such as requiring manufacturers to note on the labels—unless they can meanwhile prove otherwise—that the drugs are not effective on a longterm basis.

Truzzi quits 'debunking' committee. . .

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worse than those resulting from excesses of violence, rigging of sports presentations and game shows or biased news reporting.

Copies of the complaint were sent to the Senate and House subcommittees on communications.

Truzzi said that the committee's by-laws allow voting only by its executive council. The other 35 members, termed 'fellows' (including B. F. Skinner and Carl Sagan), can advise but cannot vote. Truzzi said he refused to continue editing *Zetetics* when the board voted to make it a "hard-hitting" popular publication. He had founded *Zetetics* as a newsletter before the committee was organized in 1976.

"I felt we should keep the debate in a scholarly framework," Truzzi said. "Except for Ray Hyman, the other members of the executive council are primarily debunkers."

Hyman, a psychologist at the University

of Oregon, acknowledged that he and Truzzi were at the "far end of the spectrum" in that they did not automatically equate belief in the paranormal with irrationality. Hyman said, "I believe that our job is to present the skeptical point of view—responsibly. But some of the others believe that we can't get attention if we argue in an academic journal or if we qualify our statements. They feel we have to paint things in black and white or the media won't pay attention."

"So far they've been right in getting publicity—but at the price of embarrassing people like Marcello, who didn't want his name associated with what they're doing."

It's a question of tactics."

Hyman said he agreed with the complaint against the NBC special, "but some of the things our committee protests are just senseless, pointless, a lot of noise."

Truzzi said he had objected to *Zetetics'* continued association with *The Humanist* (which has an anti-religion stance) and to Kurtz's frequent television talk-show appearances purporting to represent the committee. He said he felt Kurtz was unfamiliar with the parapsychology literature and also presented the experiments of authors published in *Zetetics* as if they were investigations done by the committee.

Future research. . .

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physics so we could understand what those other people who didn't have physics already knew."

He acknowledged his own difficulty in really comprehending the idea of holographic mind in a fundamentally timeless, spaceless universe. "But when the next generation comes along it won't be so hard for them."

An abridged version of the proceedings will appear at a future date in *Re-Visions*, a new journal (see *Tools and Resources*, page 4). Tapes will not be available.

Subjective reports contradictory

Physical arousal noted in 'frigid' women

It is possible that women who never or rarely experience orgasm actually undergo normal physical arousal that they either refuse to acknowledge or fail to recognize.

In a study conducted by Julia Heiman and Patricia Morokoff, State University of New York, 11 non-orgasmic women and 55 controls were instructed to fantasize about sex, then listened to an erotic five-minute tape, fantasized again for three minutes, watched a film, then fantasized for another three minutes.

Their subjective reports of non-arousal did not correlate with the physiological measurements. There was no significant

difference in the criterion of arousal—vasocongestion in the vagina—between the clinical group and the controls, who were women from the surrounding community.

The mean age of the non-orgasmic women was 28, that of the controls 30.

Surprisingly, the women whose physiological response was greatest were those who reported the least arousal during intercourse at home. Heiman suggested that they may not have learned to recognize early stages of sexual excitement, may hold different expectations of what arousal should feel like or may harbor negative feelings that short-circuit the awareness of arousal.

Heiman: Dept. of Psychiatry, SUNY School of Medicine, Stony Brook, N. Y. 11790.

